

**Claims:**

1. Apparatus for depositing granular food products onto moving elements, comprising

a rotatably supported cylindrical feeder having recessed portions on its outer surface for temporarily accommodating the granular food products to be deposited;

conveying means for conveying the moving elements, the conveying means being disposed below the cylindrical feeder, the conveying means being movable in the same direction as the direction of rotation of the cylindrical feeder;

a container for storing the granular food products to be deposited and having an opening facing the cylindrical feeder for supplying the granular food products to be deposited to the feeder; and

a cover member covering a circumferential portion of the cylindrical feeder between the container and the conveying means in the direction of rotation of the cylindrical feeder.

2. Apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the container comprises an adjustable shutter member for adjusting the opening of the container.

3. Apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the container comprises at least one feeding cross channel extending with a slight inclination from the opening of the container towards the cylindrical feeder.

4. Apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein at least one feeding cross channel comprises side walls extending at their front end substantially along the periphery of the cylindrical feeder.

5. Apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the feeding cross channels each have a width perpendicular to a feeding direction of the products to the cylindrical feeder which is adapted to substantially correspond to the granular products to be deposited.

6. Apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein at least one feeding cross channel is mounted on a vibrating support.

7. Apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the number of feeding cross channels corresponds to a layout of the moving elements.

8. Apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the recessed portions on the cylindrical feeder having a layout corresponding to the granular products to be deposited.

9. Apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein the recessed portions on the cylindrical feeder are arranged in groups.

10. Apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the movement of the cylindrical feeder is synchronized with the movement of the conveying means.

11. Apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein a mechanical link between the cylindrical feeder and the conveying means is provided.

12. Apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the moving elements are molds for food products.

13. Apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a stripping means disposed between the container and a leading end of the cover member.

14. Apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the stripping means comprises a rotatably supported brush.

15. Apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein the stripping means comprises a housing.

16. Apparatus according to Claim 15, wherein the cover member comprises a displacement mechanism for adjusting a peripheral position of the cover member with respect to the cylindrical feeder.

17. Apparatus according to Claim 16, wherein the cylindrical feeder comprises peripheral grooves aligned with the symmetric axes of the recessed portions and wherein the apparatus further comprises a scraping means guided in each of the grooves.

18. Apparatus according to Claim 17, wherein the depth of the grooves is greater than the depth of the recessed portions.

19. Apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the scraping means is rotatably supported and comprises a return mechanism.

20. Method for depositing granular food products onto moving elements comprising the steps of:

- (a) supplying the granular food products from a container to recessed portions of a cylindrical feeder in a position located at an upper half of a cylindrical feeder;
- (b) conveying the granular food products in recessed portions of the cylindrical feeder by rotation of the feeder to a position located at a lower half of the cylindrical feeder substantially vertically above the moving elements; and

- (c) dropping the granular food products onto the moving elements.

21. Method according to Claim 20, further comprising the step of loosening the granular food products in the recessed portions by way of a scraping means before dropping them onto the moving elements.

22. Method according to Claim 21, further comprising the step of sweeping away excess granular products between steps (a) and (b).